



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From the Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care*

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Dr Birendra Sinha
National President
British International Doctors' Association Ltd
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17 June 2020

Dear Dr Sinha,

Thank you for your letter of 19 May 2020 surrounding the removal of the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) for health care workers.

Since your letter on 19 May the Prime Minister has made it clear that NHS and care workers should be removed from the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) as soon as possible. The Department of Health and Social Care alongside the Home Office are considering how to make this work and further details will be announced shortly.

The IHS has raised approximately £900 million for the NHS since its introduction, and it is fair to expect those who may use the NHS and are not contributing to the health and care sector through their occupation, will continue to contribute towards the NHS services available to them.

I hope that this exemption for NHS and care workers will be of benefit for your members and the wider health and social care sector, and I thank you for what you are doing for the country during these challenging times.

Regarding your second proposal, the Global Talent visa is a UK immigration category for exceptionally talented and promising individuals in specific fields. It replaced the Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) visa on 20 February 2020.

To be considered for entry under the Global Talent visa, applicants must gain an endorsement from one of six endorsing bodies engaged by the Home Office and either be an internationally recognised leader (exceptional talent) or an emerging leader (exceptional promise) in their chosen field. Endorsements can be in the fields of science, engineering, medicine, humanities, digital technology, and arts and culture (including film and television, fashion design and architecture).

We greatly value the efforts of overseas health and care staff and the enormous contribution they make to our NHS, but most will not be international leaders in their field. The Global Talent route is not designed for regular recruitment.

Most healthcare workers will be in the UK on a Tier 2 (General) visa where they are sponsored to undertake a specified, skilled job. They can qualify for settlement after five years, the same period as most other routes which lead to settlement, such as a dependant partner of a British citizen.

The new Points Based System, being introduced in January 2020, will go further to make sure the NHS and wider health and care sector can continue to access the best and brightest talent from across the world. We will be introducing a new fast-track Healthcare visa, which will make it easier and quicker for the best global health professionals to work in the NHS, for NHS commissioned service providers, and in the social care sector. The visa fee will be reduced and talented health professionals applying can expect a decision on whether they can work in the UK within just three weeks.

I hope this answers your concern regarding the Immigration Health Surcharge and the Global Talent Visa.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

MATT HANCOCK